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	FAAE-00	VCI-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	MOFM-00	MOF-00	M-00	VCIE-00	NEA-00	DCP-00	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OIC-00	OIG-00	GIWI-00	P-00	SCT-00	DOHS-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 118079

SENSITIVE

RESENDING CABLE TO ADD EMBASSIES CANBERRA AND WELLINGTON FOR ACTION

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/03/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: US POLICY ON RECONCILIATION IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. 07 STATE 152286

[B](#). STATE 058369

[C](#). STATE 108114

Classified By: SCA DAS Donald A. Camp, Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#). (SBU) Summary and action request: Department is releasing this message to reiterate interagency agreed guidance on reconciliation with the Taliban and insurgent leaders (reftel A) in light of recent press reporting. Posts are requested to draw upon background paragraphs with host government interlocutors as appropriate to clarify the U.S. position. Posts can draw upon communication strategy talking points for use with the press.

 BACKGROUND

[2](#). (SBU) President Karzai's September 30 Eid message, amidst growing signs of disunity among insurgents and terrorists, has prompted suggestions of more ambitious discussions with insurgent elements about their return to legitimate life in Afghanistan. In his message, President Karzai stated, "For two years I have been sending letters and messages to the Saudi king, and requested him, as a world Muslim leader, to help us bring peace in Afghanistan. The preparation for negotiations is going on, on a daily basis. Our envoys traveled many times to Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, but the discussions have not started yet. We hope that it happens soon." Reftel C provides an update on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's involvement in reconciliation talks with the Taliban. The Government of Afghanistan has made clear that it will only talk to individuals and groups who are prepared to renounce violence and accept the Constitutional order.

[3](#). (C/REL NATO, EU, KSA, UAE, PAKISTAN, INDIA, KUWAIT, OMAN, QATAR, TURKMENISTAN, UZBEKISTAN, TAJIKISTAN, KYRGYSTAN,

KAZAKHSTAN) The U.S. goal is to support the Government of Afghanistan in defeating the insurgency and bringing long-term stability to Afghanistan based on democratic principles and respect for human rights. Co-opting elements of the Taliban and other insurgent groups, and bringing them verifiably into peaceful, law-abiding life would strengthen Afghan society and weaken the insurgency. It could also provide intelligence benefits, impede enemy recruitment and save lives.

¶4. (SBU) International press reporting is inaccurately stating that the U.S. will accept the reconciliation of Taliban Leader Mullah Omar. The U.S. has not taken any such position. The U.S. continues to support the possibility of talks between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban and other insurgent groups, but any talks should be Afghan-led and identify clear redlines that are agreed by the Afghans and international partners.

¶5. (C/REL NATO, EU, KSA, UAE, PAKISTAN, INDIA, KUWAIT, OMAN, QATAR, TURKMENISTAN, UZBEKISTAN, TAJIKISTAN, KYRGYSTAN, KAZAKHSTAN) It is the USG position that individuals or groups interested in reconciling must be prepared to (a) lay down their arms and return to normal life, (b) recognize the constitution and the authority of the democratically elected government, (c) refrain from criminal activity once they return, and (d) have no association with Al-Qaeda. Additionally, there should be no power-sharing or other arrangements that would give insurgents governmental authority as a reward for reconciliation (which would effectively reward insurgent violence and undermine the constitutional processes), and there will be no protected geographic areas or other arrangements that would limit the authority of the central government in any region of Afghanistan.

¶6. (C/REL NATO, EU, KSA, UAE, PAKISTAN, INDIA, KUWAIT, OMAN, QATAR, TURKMENISTAN, UZBEKISTAN, TAJIKISTAN, KYRGYSTAN, KAZAKHSTAN) The U.S. will continue to pursue vigorously its counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations. If the Government of Afghanistan advises the U.S. Government of its intention to pursue reconciliation negotiations with individuals or groups, the U.S. will consider whether to suspend military operations or activities that target these individuals or groups. The Government of Afghanistan should be in a position of strength in these negotiations, with Afghan National Security Forces and international forces continuing to conduct security operations.

¶7. (SBU) The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has an important role in the Muslim world, and we believe Saudi Arabia can play a constructive role in supporting Afghan-led efforts to reconcile with the Taliban and other insurgents.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

¶8. (U) U.S. spokespersons may use the following points in explaining U.S. policy on reconciliation.

-- The Government of Afghanistan and its partners recognize that no insurgency can be defeated by military means alone. Afghan authorities have also detected indications of war-weariness and a desire from some tribal elders to end the violence and come to terms with the Afghan government.

-- As he seeks to end the senseless violence in Afghanistan, it is essential that President Karzai have every possible tool at his disposal to reconcile disaffected tribes and invite them to join the political process.

-- Our policy on political reconciliation has not changed. We continue to support reconciliation talks that the Government of Afghanistan initiates and leads, with the understanding that reconciliation with insurgents will require that they lay down their arms and return to normal life, recognize the constitution and the authority of the

democratically elected Afghan government, refrain from criminal activity once they return, and have no association with Al-Qaeda.

If asked whether Mullah Omar or other senior members of the Taliban can be reconciled:

-- Press reports indicating that the United States has agreed to accept the reconciliation of Taliban leader Mullah Omar are false.

-- We have no serious indication from the Taliban that they are willing to reconcile with the Afghan government. Mullah Omar also has the blood of thousands of Americans on his hands, based upon the support that he provided Osama bin Laden.

-- Reconciliation with individuals or entities under international sanction ultimately will require consultation with the international community.

-- Reconciliation with any individual, regardless of rank or affiliation, should be pursued within the parameters established by the Afghan government, namely: insurgents must be willing to lay down their arms and return to normal life, recognize the constitution and the authority of the democratically elected Afghan government, refrain from criminal activity once they return, and have no association with Al-Qaeda.

RICE